

Ashraya of avidyA

1. It has been stated in samkshepa shArIraka 1.319:

आश्रयत्वविषयत्वभागिनी निर्विभागचित्तिरेव केवला । पूर्वसिद्धतमसो हि पश्चिमो नाश्रयो भवति नापि गोचरः ॥

The Ashraya and vishaya of avidyA is divisionless (nirvibhAga) advitIya (kevalA) shuddha chaitanya alone. That which is subsequent to the earlier-established darkness (avidyA) can neither be the Ashraya nor the vishaya thereof.

The Ashraya of anAdi avidyA can be some anAdi entity only. That is either shuddha chaitanya, Ishwara or jIva. However, since Ishwara-jIva vyavasthA itself is caused by avidyA, they are subsequent to avidyA. Though avidyA, Ishwara and jIva are all anAdi, yet on account of Ishwara-jIva-vibhAga being avidyA-kArya, avidyA is said to be earlier-established and hence neither Ishwara nor jIva can be the Ashraya of avidyA.

Thus, the Ashraya of avidyA is shuddha chaitanya alone.

2. Just as mirror has sambandha with mukha-mAtra i.e. shuddha-mukha i.e. mukha without bimba-tva, avidyA has sambandha with shuddha chaitanya. The same mukha becomes divided as bimba and pratibimba due to the upAdhi of the mirror. Similarly, shuddha chaitanya appears as Ishwara and jIva due to the upAdhi of avidyA. Now, because the upAdhi is pratibimba-paksha-pAtI, the features of the mirror appear in pratibimba alone and not in bimba. That is why avidyA-krita-samsAra manifests in pratibimba jIva only, and not in bimba Ishwara. दर्पणस्य मुखमात्रसंबन्धेऽपि प्रतिमुखे मालिन्यवत् प्रतिबिम्बे जीवे संसारः, न बिम्बे ब्रह्मणि; उपाधेः प्रतिविम्बपक्षपातित्वात् ।

What exactly is this pratibimba-paksha-pAtitva of upAdhi?

It means that atishaya-kArya-karatvam of upAdhi is in pratibimba alone.

What exactly is this atishaya-kArya-karatvam?

UpAdhi produces effects in both bimba and pratibimba. Thus, kArya-karatvam is common to both bimba and pratibimba. For e.g. upAdhi creates division between bimba

and pratibimba. Bimba has bimbatva and pratibimba has pratibimbatva due to upAdhi. Thus, vibhAga is produced in both bimba and pratibimba. However, the features of upAdhi are specifically manifested in pratibimba alone such as colour, grossness etc. Hence, there is atishaya-kArya-karatvam of upAdhi in pratibimba alone. And hence upAdhi is called pratibimba-paksha-pAti. That is why kartritva-bhoktritva-samsAra is reflected only in pratibimba jIva but not in bimba Ishwara.

Also, LaguchandrikAkAra accepts pratibimba-paksha-pAti to be उपाधे: प्रतिबिम्बं प्रति स्वविषयाच्छादकत्वम् i.e. upAdhi covers its vishaya to pratibimba alone and not to the bimba and that is called pratibimba-paksha-pAti. Thus, avidyA covers shuddha Brahman to jIva only and not to Ishwara.

What exactly do we mean by this atishaya-kArya-karatvam? Does it mean that the number of effects produced in bimba is more than that in pratibimba? Or does it mean that the effect produced in pratibimba is somewhat different/special than that in bimba?

atishaya-kArya-karatvam basically means that the kArya produced in pratibimba is vilakshaNa to that in bimba. And that is covering-of-the-vishaya-of-upAdhi-to-pratibimba. Since this covering is only to pratibimba and not to bimba, the effect produced in pratibimba is vilakshaNa to that in bimba. This leads to atishaya-kArya-karatvam in pratibimba which implies that upAdhi is pratibimba-paksha-pAti.

3. But how can shuddha chaitanya be the Ashraya of ajnAna? Shuddha chaitanya is prakAsha-swarUpa whereas ajnAna is like darkness.

Shuddha chaitanya is not ajnAna-virodhI but only pramANa-vritti-pratibimbata-chaitanya is ajnAna-virodhI. And it cannot be argued that then shuddha chaitanya will be inert like pot as it is non-contradictory to ajnAna. This is so because it is the same chaitanya which destroys ajnAna when it is reflected in

pramANa-vritti. Here the analogy is BBV SAra 1.4.225 तृणादेर्भासिकाप्येषा सूर्यदीप्तिस्तृणं दहेत्।
सूर्यकान्तमुपारुह्य तन्न्यायं चिति योजयेत्॥

4. **But it is clearly grasped by the sAkshI that “I am ignorant”. This shows that Ashraya of avidyA is ahamkAra.**

The Ashraya of ajnAna is shuddha chaitanya. However, there is tAdAtmya-adhyAsa of ahamkAra with shuddha chaitanya. Therefore, ajnAna which has Ashraya as shuddha chaitanya appears to have ahamkAra as Ashraya. Just as burning-hood belongs to fire. But fire has tAdAtmya-adhyAsa with an iron ball. Hence, there is the feeling -- the iron ball burns.

Thus, ahamkAra and ajnAna both have adhyAsa with the same shuddha chaitanya. Thus, both superimposed entities have sAmAnAdhikaraNya and accordingly, ajnAna appears to possess ahamkAra as Ashraya.

Further, ahamkAra is subservient to ajnAna as the latter is upAdAna of ahamkAra. Further, ahamkAra is with beginning whereas ajnAna is without a beginning. Hence, ahamkAra cannot be the Ashraya of ajnAna.

5. **But Shruti says that shuddha chaitanya is niravadya (defect-less) etc. Being the Ashraya of avidyA will contradict Shruti.**

Not so. Because upAdhi is pratibimba-paksha-pAtI and the defects etc will arise only in pratibimba jIva but not in Ishwara or shuddha chaitanya. Also Shvetashvatara Shruti says that MAyI is Maheshwara. Here, it should be noted that there is tAdAtmya between Maheshwaratva-upahita-chaitanya and shuddha-chaitanya. Hence, though avidyA has shuddha-chaitanya as Ashraya, it is the Maheshwara which is stated as MAyI. Maheshwara is MAyA-adhIsha whereas jIva is MAyA-niruddha. This is so because avidyA covers the chaitanya only to the jIva and not to the Ishwara.

When jIva is stated by ShvetAshvatara Shruti to be ignorant, it is not to posit the Ashraya-tva of ajnAna to jIva but to posit the ajnAna-AvaraNa of shuddha chaitanya to the jIva.

6. **But there should be sAmAnAdhikaraNya of bhrama and jnAna. Since shuddha chaitanya cannot have bhrama as bhrama must belong to jIva. Similarly, the jnAna which removes bhrama also must belong to jIva. There has to be sAmAnAdhikaraNya of ajnAna with bhrama. Hence, ajnAna must have jIva as Ashraya.**

Despite ajnAna having shuddha chaitanya as Ashraya, there is sAmAnAdhikaraNya of bhrama, pramA and ajnAna. It is the shuddha chaitanya which is stated as jnAtA on account of adhyAsa with antah-karaNa. Thus, pramA belongs to pramAtA which is jIva or jnAtA as pramA is antah-karaNa-vritti. Further, in case of bhrama, the vishayAkArA anirvachanIyA avidyA-vritti arises which actually pertains to sAkshI and yet on account of tAdAtmya-adhyAsa with shuddha chaitanya appears to be bhrama of jnAtA jIva.

Thus, be it pramA or bhrama or ajnAna, they are superimposed in shuddha chaitanya either directly or indirectly i.e. either sAkshAt or through paramparA. Thus, it is the shuddha chaitanya alone which is the adhikaraNa of bhrama, pramA and ajnAna. Accordingly, sAmAnAdhikaraNya is not violated.

Also, only that entity can be the Ashraya of ajnAna which is not dependent on ajnAna and which has prasakta-prakAshatvam. That is only shuddha chaitanya because only it has both प्रसक्तप्रकाशत्वम् as well as अज्ञानानाश्रितत्वम्।

7. **What exactly is the Ashraya of the shukti-ajnAna then? Is it also shuddha chaitanya?**

What we refer to as shukti-ajnAna is actually a combination of two facets of ajnAna. First one has shukti-gata-idama-asha-avachinna-chaitanya as the Ashraya whereas the other one has ahamartha-avachchinna-chaitanya as Ashraya. Former is called abhAna-ApAdaka-ajnAna which is destroyed only by aparoksha-pramA whereas the

latter is called asattva-ApAdaka-ajnAna which is destroyed by either paroksha-pramA or aparoksha-pramA. abhAna-ApAdaka-ajnAna is the upAdAna kAraNa of the superimposed-silver and also the jnAna-of-superimposed-silver.

The asattva-ApAdaka-ajnAna has the pramAtritva-prayojaka-upAdhi-avachchhinna-chaitanya as Ashraya. Here, pramAtritva-prayojaka-upAdhi is deha-avachchhinna-vritti-mat-antah-karaNa. It is loosely stated to be ahamartha-avachchhinna-chaitanya. However, the actual definition is as given above.

8. **But how can there be pratibimba of shuddha-chaitanya?**

(a) **Only that entity which has rUpa can have pratibimba.**

(b) **It will result into beginning-ness of jIva.**

(c) **There cannot be pratibimba as shuddha chaitanya and ajnAna have differential sattA just as sun does not get reflected in mirage-water.**

(a) rUpa itself does not have rUpa. And yet, it has pratibimba. So, no such rule can be made. There is also the reflection of AkAsha.

(b) The upAdhi-sambandha is anAdi. Hence, this defect does not arise.

(c) Just as redness-of-crystal, which is prAtibhAsika, is reflected in vyAvahArika-mirror, there can be reflection of shuddha chaitanya in vishama-sattAka ajnAna having differential order of reality. Chit-pratibimba is proved through Shruti. Accordingly, the requisite purity is accepted in avidyA whereas mirage-water is accepted to not possess such purity on account of non-reflection.

It cannot also not be said that avidyA having transformed to AkAsha etc cannot have pratibimba as crystal still allows reflection even if it is converted as a utensil. However, if the crystal is powdered, it does not allow reflection. Thus, avidyA having pariNAma of AkAsha etc does not imply non-reflection on account of Shruti.

9. **Will there not be vyadhikarana of moksha and bondage?**

No. On account of the identity of avachchhedya-amsha.

10. **This avidyA is swAbhAvika or aupAdhika? If swAbhAvika, it cannot be removed. If aupAdhika, what is its upAdhi? If avidyA itself, then it will result in AtmAshraya dosha. If anything else, it will lead to anyonyAshraya dosha, chakraka dosha or anavasthA.**

avidyA itself is the upAdhi as it is swa-para-nirvAhaka. It does not lead to AtmAshraya-dosha just as bheda does not lead to AtmAshraya-dosha. Bheda differentiates a pot from a cloth while residing therein. At the same time, the bheda by itself differentiates itself from the pot also. Bheda causes the knowledge - “pot is different from cloth” AND also causes the knowledge - “bheda is different from pot and cloth”. Just as there is no AtmAshraya in the case of bheda, in the case of avidyA also, there is no dosha.

Even if we accept avidyA to be swAbhAvika, if the meaning of swAbhAvika is taken either to mean “Agantuka-kAraNa-ajanyatva” or “anAditva”, then like pot-rUpa and like pot-prAk-abhAva respectively, it is still removable.

Thus, it is clear that shuddha-chaitanya is the Ashraya of avidyA.